



School Bus Purchase Program: Process & FAQs

Pat Hinckley
Transportation and Facilities Administrator

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Learning Objectives

1. Explain the Maine School Bus Purchase Program
 - What does the program data look like?
 - How can districts be considered for a bus purchase?
 - How are bus approval decisions made?
2. Frequently asked questions

This program supports the Maine DOE Strategic Plan core priority 5: coordinated and effective state support.

Maine School Bus Purchase Program



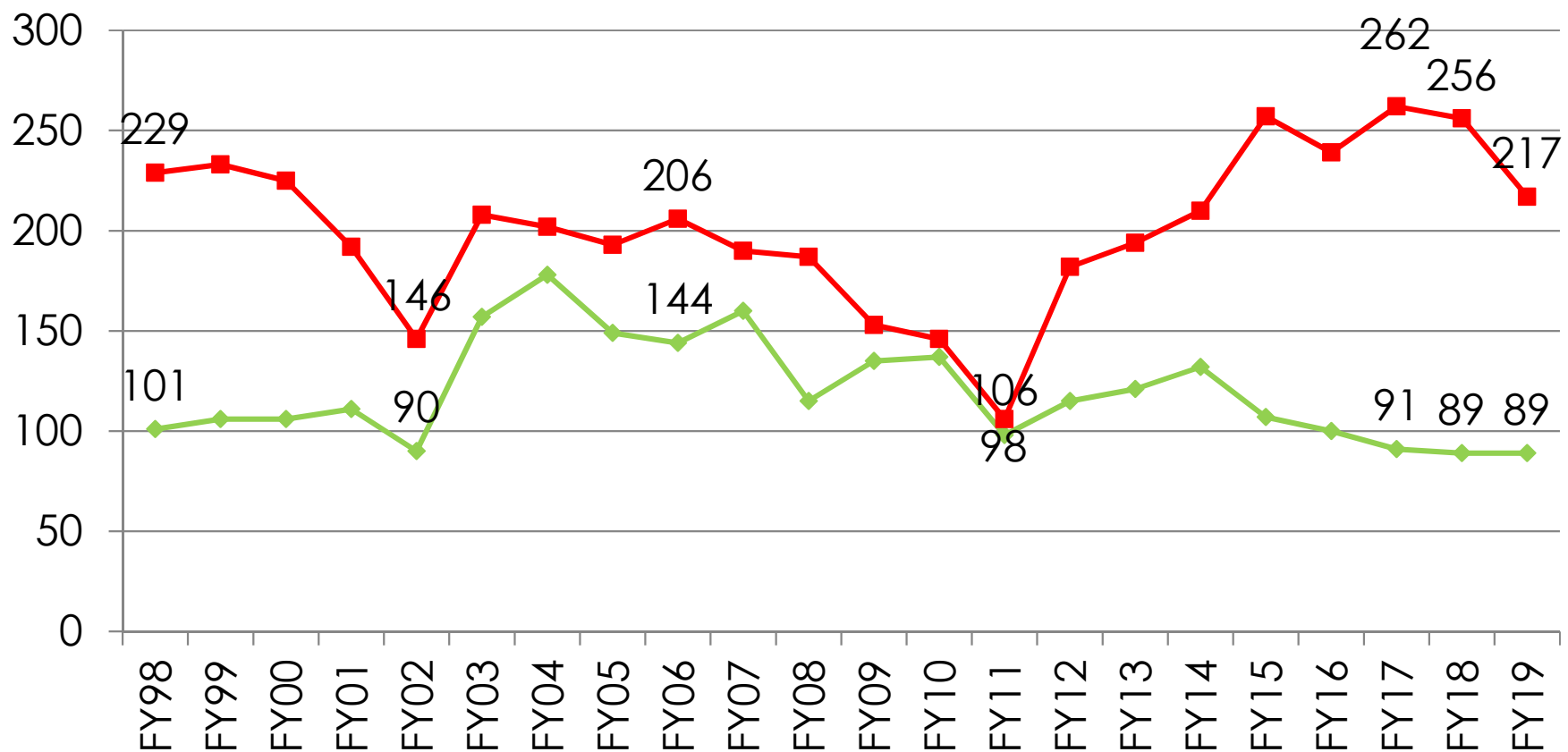
Program Purpose

- The purpose of the Maine School Bus Purchase Program is to achieve the most equitable distribution of limited dollars to maintain a modern safe fleet of school buses and respond to emergency special bus needs

Note: Districts are responsible for school bus maintenance

Program Data

– SAU Applications and State Approvals

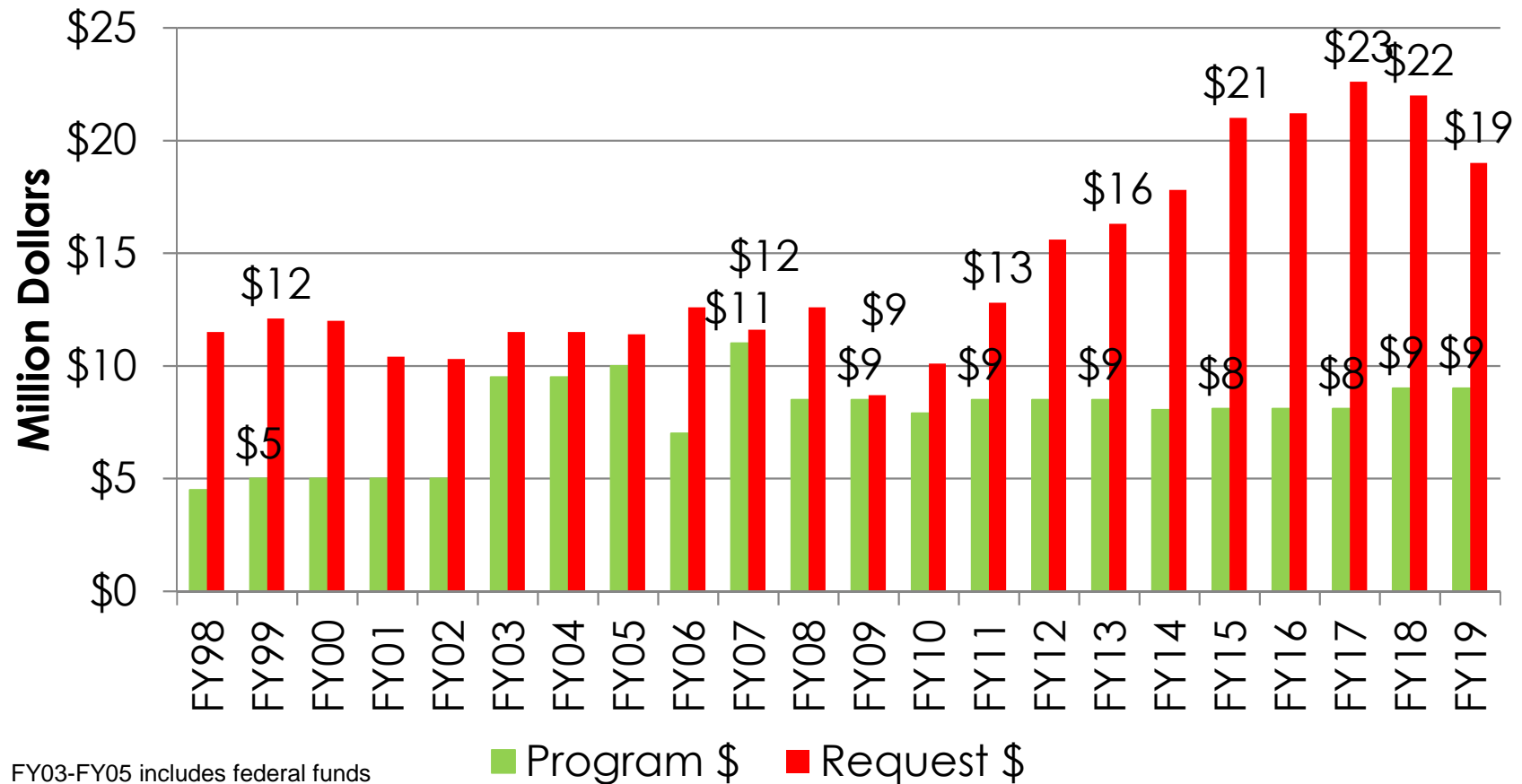


Note 1: FY03-FY05 includes federal funds
 Note 2: Counts are round one

◆ Approvals ■ Requests

Program Data

– State Dollars and SAU Bus Request Dollars



Note 1: FY03-FY05 includes federal funds

Note 2: Request dollars are round one

Program Cycle

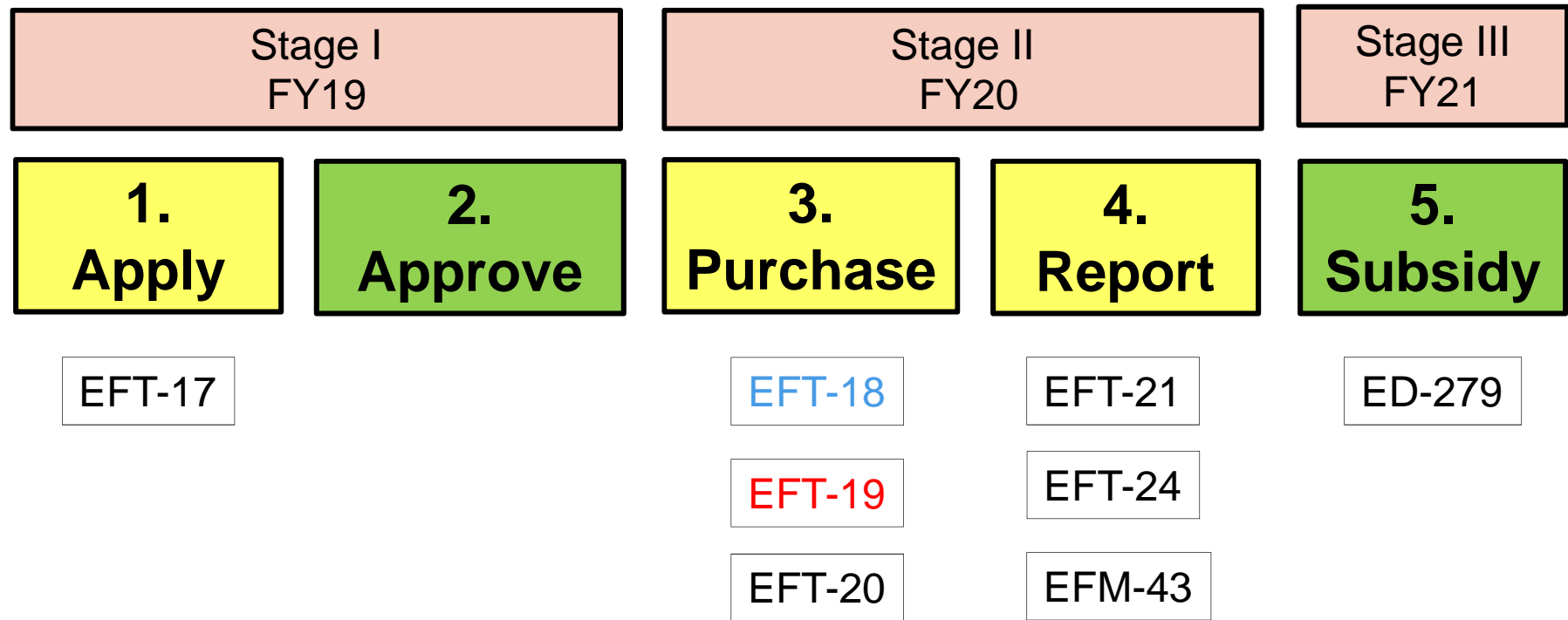
– 3 Stages and 5 Steps Per Cycle

- Stage I
 - 1. Application Nov. 1 – Nov. 25 (EFT-17)
 - 2. Approval (Dec. 30 to Jan. 15)
- Stage II
 - 3. **Purchase** (EFT-20) or cancel a bus (EFT-19)
 - 4. Transportation reports
- Stage III
 - 5. Subsidy begins (ED 279)



Program Cycle (cont.)

– 3 Stages and 5 Steps Over 3 Years



Types of Program Applications

– Two (2) Types

- 1. “**Bus replacement**” application
 - Replace an existing bus lost due to **emergency**
 - Replace an existing bus near the **end** of useful life
 - Add a new bus to the district fleet and remove the existing bus from service (sale or parts)
- 2. “**Addition to fleet**” application
 - Respond to unique district situations
 - Add a new bus to the district fleet **without** taking an existing bus out of service

Minimum Program Qualifications

– “Bus Replacement” (A)

- Passenger Vans
 - Shall have **seven (7) years** useful life **and** accumulated 100,000 miles (replace van with bus)
- Type C school buses
 - Shall have **ten (10) years** useful life **and** accumulated 125,000 miles
- Type D school buses
 - Shall have **fourteen (14) years** useful life **and** accumulated 245,000 miles (effective 09/16/17)

NOTE: qualification is shown in NEO vehicle inventory under “replacement eligibility”

Minimum Program Qualifications

– “ Bus Replacement” (emergency) (A)

- A “bus replacement” emergency situation occurs when a bus is damaged beyond economic repair due to:
 1. Accidents
 2. Fire
 3. Vandalism or
 4. Other [total] losses

NOTE: to qualify districts must meet 1 of the 4 emergency qualifications

Minimum Program Qualifications

– “Addition To Fleet” (unique) (B)

- An “addition to fleet” unique situation occurs when a district needs:
 1. Buses equipped to transport the **handicapped**
 2. Buses to accommodate increased **enrollment**
 3. Buses for non-critical **special purposes**
 4. Buses to replace **contracted services** (emergency)
 5. Buses to replace **contracted services** (planned)

NOTE: to qualify districts must meet 1 of the 5 addition to fleet qualifications

How Can Districts Be Considered For A Bus Purchase?

- A district must submit an **application** for a new bus
 - School Bus Purchase Request (form EFT-17)
 - “Bus replacement” or
 - “Addition to fleet”
 - The forms are located in NEO Transportation
- Applications are received by the state annually
 - Open date: November 1
 - Close date: November 25
 - Emergency requests are open all year

How Are Buses Put On A List To Be Considered For A Bus Purchase? (cont.)

Dashboard Home **Vehicle Inventory and Requests** Annual Data Reports Help

Vehicle Inventory and New Bus Request

SAU Name: RSU 63/MSAD 63
Status: In Service

B Bus Request for Addition To Fleet
*This is for state subsidy approval only

Show 50 entries

VIN	LVN	Make	Vehicle Type	Bus Type	Capacity	Model Year	Mileage	Status	Replacement Eligibility	Navigation
1BAKGCKA16F233929	33	Blue Bird	School Bus	C	77	2006	186365	In Service	Yes	Select Link
1D4GP45R56B562517	26	Other	Minivan		7	2006	207214	In Service	Yes	Select Link
1BAANCPA0YF089707	09	Blue Bird	School Bus	D	84	1999	218195	In Service	No	EFT-17 Request Replacement
1BAANCPA6YF093518	17	Blue Bird	School Bus	D	84	2000	216803	In Service	No	EFT-16 Emergency Replacement
1BAANCPA92F204005	11	Blue Bird	School Bus	D	84	2002	219952	In Service	No	Request Refurbishment
1BABNC0A14F216540	34	Blue Bird	School Bus	D	84	2004	145212	In Service	No	Edit Vehicle
1BABNC0A34F216541	35	Blue Bird	School Bus	D	84	2004	226668	In Service	No	Dispose
1BABNC0A0CF288477	29	Blue Bird	School Bus	D	84	2012	93552	In Service	No	Take out of Service

A

Sample: District Bus Application (EFT-17)

Retiring Bus

Dashboard Home Admin Vehicle Inventory and Requests Annual Data Reports Help

Details for School Bus Request Replacement

SAU: RSU 63/MSAD 63

Replaced Bus (Old)

VIN: 1BAKGCKA16F233929
Model Year: 2006
Bus Type: C
Capacity: 77
Manufacturer:
Make: Blue Bird
LVN: 33

Replaced Bus (Old)

Age (in years): 12
Mileage (as reported 6/30): 186365

Note: Approvals are based on district requests. If actual approval terms are changed (without prior Department approval) when the district purchases a bus, the approval will be canceled or subsidy will be reduced.

Requested Bus (New)

New Bus

1. School Bus Data:

1.1 Bus Capacity: 77
1.2 Lift Equipment: No
1.3 Type: C

2. Request Details:

2.1 Purchase Fiscal Year: 2018
2.2 Replacement Reason: Meets minimum requirements
2.3 Replacement Justification: High Mileage, High Age
2.4 Replacement Advanced Justification: N/A

3. Financial:

3.1 Payment Type: Lease Purchase
3.2 Payment Years: 3
3.3 SAU Replacement Cost Estimate: \$90,000.00
3.4 State Bid Value (Previous Fiscal Year): \$80,000.00

Sample: State Approval NEO Notice

Dashboard Home Vehicle Inventory and Requests Annual Data Reports Help

Bus Requests Summary

Select SAU: RSU 20
Purchase Fiscal Year: 2018
Status: Select All

Export to Excel

Show 25 entries Search:

SAU	Fiscal Year	Request Type	Replacement Bus (old)					Requested Bus (New)						
			Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)	Bus Type	Capacity	Model Year	Mileage (as of 6/30)	Bus Type	Capacity	Requested Payment Years	SAU Cost Estimate	Request Status	DOE Approval Date	Superintendent Authorized Date
RSU 20	2018	Replacement	4UZAAXCS44CM96976	C	64	2004	202436	C	64	5	\$90,000.00	Applied - Round 1	N/A	N/A
RSU 20	2018	Replacement	4UZAAXBUX2CK16583	C	78	2002	245573	C	81	5	\$87,000.00	Approved	1/13/2017 12:29:45 PM	N/A
RSU 20	2018	Addition	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	C	64	N/A	\$90,000.00	Approved	N/A	N/A
Totals	3										\$267,000.00			

A

B

NOTE: Superintendents receive approval notice by email

Sample: State Approval Superintendent Notice



doe-neo-account-do-not-reply@maine.gov

pdoyen@rsu56.org; Hinckley, Pat ▾

12/28/2018

Transportation Vehicle request Approval Email : RSU 56 ▾

Transportation Vehicle Approval - SAU: RSU 56

RSU 56 **Replacement request** to retire VIN # 1BABKCOA92F204920 for purchase **FY 2020** was Approved on 12/28/2018 .

To authorize this purchase the Superintendent must go to NEO Transportation Bus Request Summary Tab, Click the details link and then click the Superintendent Authorized For Purchase button.

***Note:** In order to recieve state funding, Superintendents authorization for purchase is required and districts must purchase the new bus and make at least one payment during the Fiscal Year of the approval.*

Do not reply to this message as it comes from an automated service and will not be answered.

Thank you

Maine Department of Education
School Transportation

Sample: Superintendent Purchase Authorization

Bus Requests Summary

Select SAU:
Purchase Fiscal Year:
Status:

Click on "Details"

_ scroll to bottom of page

_ click on "Superintendent Authorized For Purchase"

_ time date stamp will populate

Export to Excel

* 0 mileage = EFT-24 is incomplete for that FY

Show 25 entries

Search:

			Replacement Bus (old)						Requested Bus (New)									
SAU	Fiscal Year	Request Type	Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)	Bus Type	Capacity	Model Year	Prior FY Mileage(as of 06/30) *	Current reporting Mileage(as of 06/30) *	Bus Type	Capacity	Requested Payment Years	SAU Cost Estimate	Request Status	DOE Approval Date	Superintendent Authorized Date	Estimated State Bid	Final State Bid	
RSU 52/MSAD 52	2018	Replacement	4UZAAXCS43CK32414	C	77	2003	199131	199131	C	77	3	\$85,000.00	State Approved	11/17/2017 5:41:07 PM	N/A	\$79,332.00	\$79,361.00	Details
RSU 52/MSAD 52	2018	Replacement	1BAKGCKA14F215833	C	60	2004	221129	230342	C	77	3	\$85,000.00	State Approved	1/19/2018 1:07:11 PM	N/A	\$79,332.00	\$79,361.00	Details
RSU 52/MSAD 52	2018	Replacement	4UZAAXBV82CJ83924	C	72	2002	243555	243555	C	77	3	\$85,000.00	Purchase Complete	1/13/2017 12:29:45 PM	9/5/2017 3:09:13 PM	\$79,332.00	\$79,361.00	Details

How Are Bus Approval Decisions Made?

– First (1st) Priority

- “Bus Replacement”
 - Emergency situation
 - An emergency situation occurs when a bus is damaged beyond economic repair due to:
 - accidents
 - fire
 - vandalism or
 - other [total] losses

How Are Bus Approval Decisions Made?

– Second (2nd) Priority

- “Addition to Fleet”
 - Unique situation
 - An “addition to fleet” situation occurs when a district needs buses to:
 - Transport handicapped students
 - Transport for a special purpose
 - Transport increased enrollment students
 - Replace contracted services (emergency)
 - Replace contracted services (planned)

How Are Bus Approval Decisions Made?

– Third (3rd) Priority

- “Bus Replacement”
 - Age of the retiring bus
 - “Age as the primary consideration, tempered by both high and low mileage”

May Districts Buy A Bus Different From The Bus That Was Requested and Approved?

- Bus approvals are based on the **original bus request**
- **Change fiscal year of purchase?**
 - **No changes** are permitted
 - Bus approvals are valid one (1) year
 - Approvals are not carried forward
 - If a district cannot purchase a bus during the fiscal year of a Department bus approval:
 - The district must cancel the approval
 - Failure to cancel a bus prevents redistribution of funds to other districts in need of buses

May Districts Buy A Bus Different From The Bus That Was Requested and Approved? (cont.)

- Bus approvals are based on the **original bus request**
- **Change bus type: A, C, or D?**
 - Requires Department approval before purchase
 - **Bus allocation will be reduced**
 - Change down: D to C or A; C to A
 - Total state bus approval allocation is reduced to the lower bus Type rate
 - Change up: A to C or D
 - Total state bus approval allocation is held at lower bus Type rate

May Districts Buy A Bus Different From The Bus That Was Requested and Approved? (cont.)

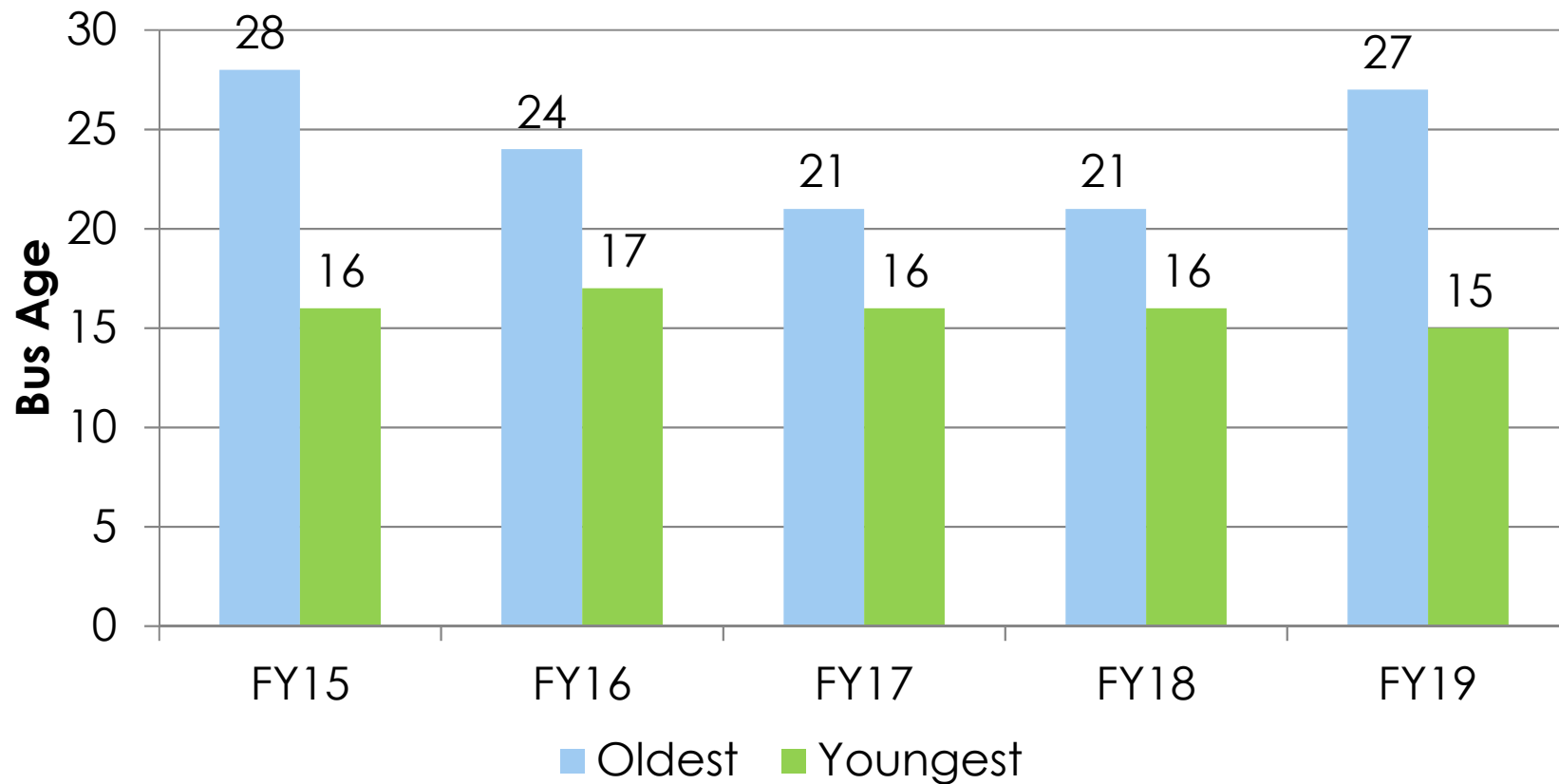
- Bus approvals are based on the **original bus request**
- **Change bus capacity?**
 - Requires Department approval before purchase
 - **Bus allocation will be reduced**
 - Change from larger to smaller bus
 - Total allocation will be reduced to the max approval amount for the **smaller bus**
 - Change from smaller to larger bus
 - Total allocation will remain the same as the max approval amount for the smaller bus

May Districts Buy A Bus Different From The Bus That Was Requested and Approved? (cont.)

- Bus approvals are based on the **original bus request**
- **Change bus purchase payment terms?**
 - Requires Department approval before purchase
 - Change from cash to term
 - District total allocation will remain the same
 - Change from term to cash
 - **Bus allocation will be reduced**
 - Change term payment years
 - Increase years, e.g. from 2 to 3: no reduction
 - Decrease years, e.g. from 5 to 2: **reduction**

Program Data

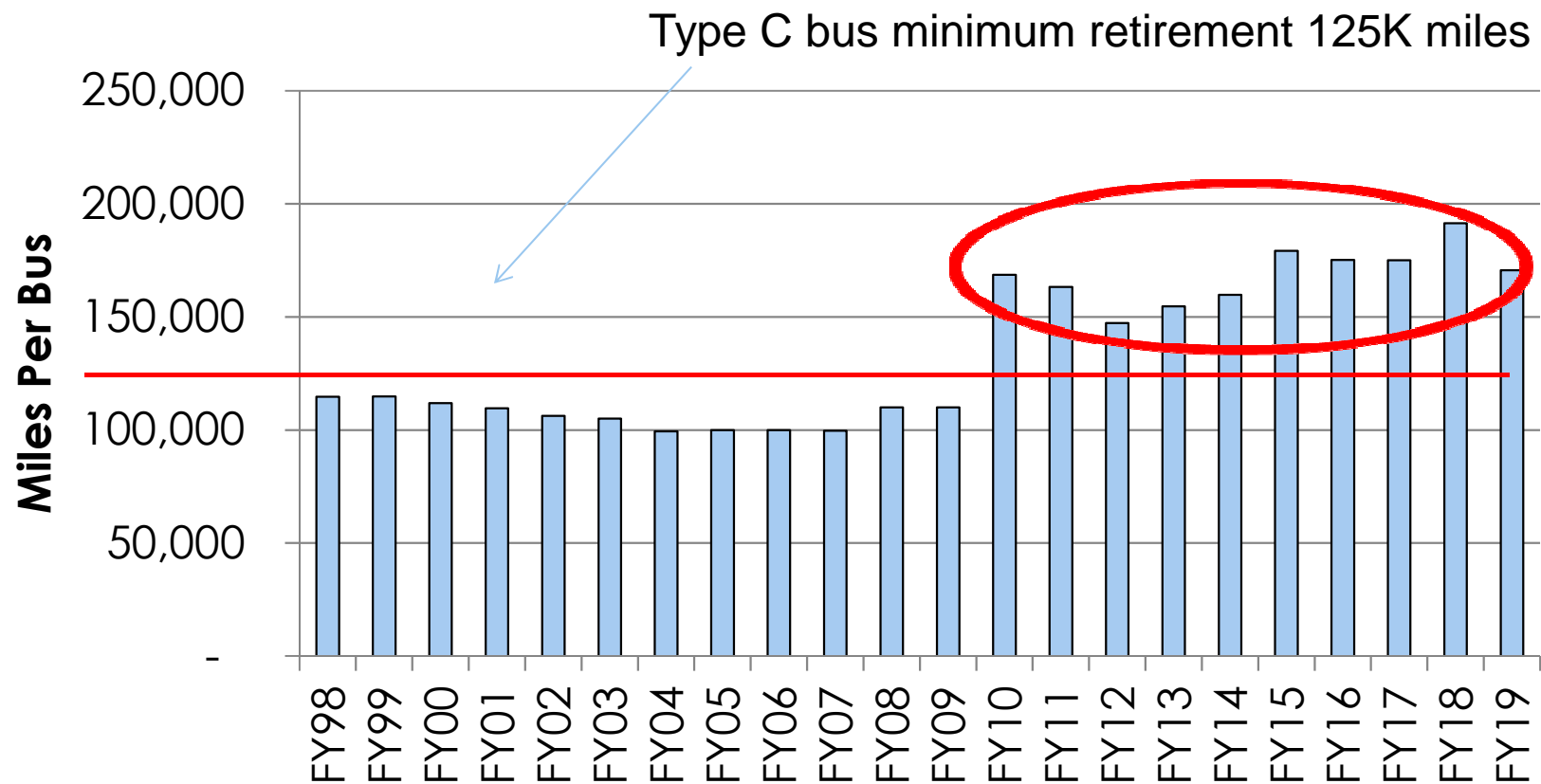
– Age Range of Approved Buses*



* Round 1; excludes unique and emergency requests

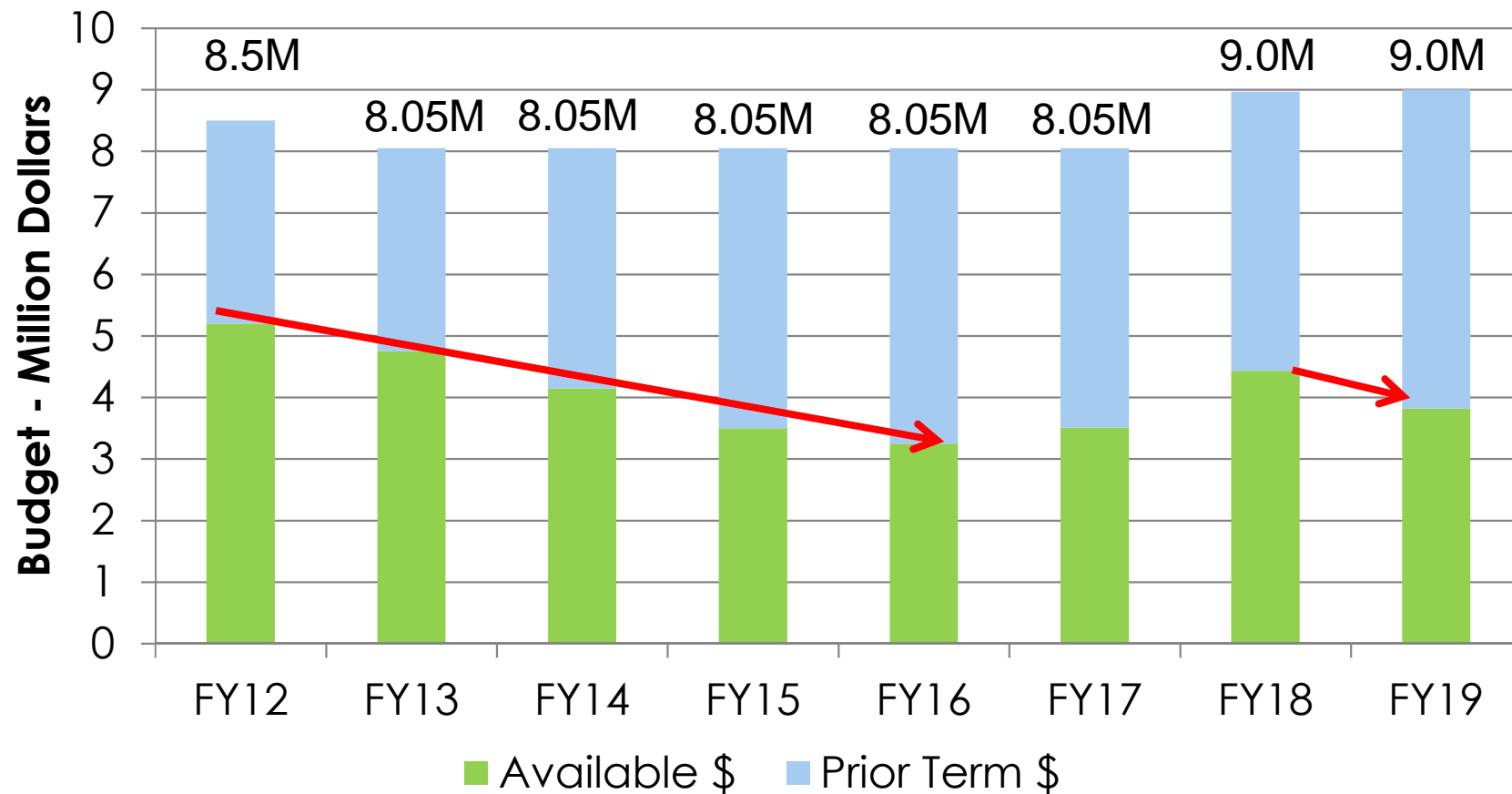
Program Data

– Average Miles When School Bus Is Retired



Program Data

– Budget



Program Application Rounds

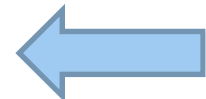
- Round 1
 - Occurs annually
 - Applications open Nov. 1 and close Nov. 25
 - Approvals announced Dec. 30 to Jan. 15
- Round 2
 - Depends on cancellations, may **or** may **not** occur
 - Opens after Round 1 approval announcement
 - All applications that did not make Round 1 approval are automatically moved to Round 2
 - No specific approval date (March to Oct.)

Program Reports

- Bus Purchase Program reports
 - EFT-17 bus request
 - EFT-18 superintendent intent to purchase bus
 - EFT-19 bus cancellation
 - EFT-20 bus purchase
- Annual transportation reports (July1 through Oct. 15)
 - EFT-21 Transportation Safety and Training
 - EFT-24 Vehicle Mileage and Operations
 - EFM-43 OOD, SPED, Homeless and CTE

Program Subsidy Reminder

- Subsidy Amount
 - ED 279 report, section 3 A, other allocations
 - Contact Maine DOE school finance
- Delayed district reports effect subsidy (ED 279)
 - Bus **cancellation** report (EFT-19)
 - Delayed cancellation reports prevent redistribution of bus money to other districts
 - Bus **purchase** report (EFT-20)
 - Delayed reports lead to withheld subsidy
- Timely transportation reports are important



Program Subsidy Reminder (cont.)

- Statutory Authority
 - “Authority to withhold state subsidy until reports are received. Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, if a school administrative unit has failed to file the reports by this Title in the format and within the time periods specified, the Commissioner may withhold state subsidy payments until these reports are received.”

EPS Model Review Cycle

- Statute requires EPS model review every 3 years
 - Transportation is in the FY 2019-20 group review
- Maine DOE contracts the review with USM
 - CEPARE studies are for the Commissioner who may use the analysis to make recommendations for changes to funding of transportation operating
 - Funding formula changes do need approval of the Committee to move forward to the full Legislature for enactment

- EPS website:

<http://www.maine.gov/education/data/eps/epsmenu.htm>

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Q1: How do I know if we received a bus approval?**
 - Superintendent receives an email; approvals post on NEO Bus Approval Summaries screen
- **Q2: Does an approval roll over to the next FY?**
 - No, approvals are valid for 1 year
- **Q3: My application met the program requirement; why wasn't my bus approved?**
 - Being eligible does not guarantee an approval; about 1/3 to 1/2 of requests are approved; bus age, special needs transport, emergencies, and additions to fleet take precedence

Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

- **Q4: Do the Maine school bus specifications include extra vehicle features?**
 - No. The state specs provide basic safety features
 - Districts determine extras features for their driving conditions and negotiate feature costs
- **Q5: How does a district bid their school buses?**
 - Districts may directly purchase buses from low bid vendors for each bus *Type/capacity* based on current Maine State School Bus Bid result
 - Per 20-A M.R.S. § 5402, districts bid their buses if they don't use the state *Type/capacity* low bidder

Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

- **Q6: What is the Maine State School Bus Bid?**
 - State Division of Procurement initiates a RFQ inviting vendors to submit quotes for school buses that meet the *minimum* state specifications
- **Q7: Can a district order a bus before the purchase FY?**
 - Bus orders can be placed when the state bus approval is issued but possession must occur the year the bus was approved to purchase
 - The bus order should identify the FY the district may take possession of the new bus

Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

- **Q8: Is it OK to change the payment term on my bus approval?**
 - Yes and subsidy is **reduced** if payment years are reduced, e.g., 5 year term to 1 year cash
- **Q9: Is it OK to buy a different bus type or capacity than the bus that was approved?**
 - Yes and subsidy is **reduced** if type or capacity are less than the approved type or capacity
- **Q10: How much subsidy will the district receive?**
 - Transportation provides maximum bus approval; finance provides final subsidy calculation

Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

- Q11: Is it OK to retire a different bus than the bus (VIN) that was submitted and approved on the original bus request (EFT-17)?
 - No. Bus approvals are based on the original bus request (EFT-17) retiring bus age and mileage
 - However, the district may cancel the original request and approval then submit a new request (EFT-17) using a different bus (VIN)

Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

- Q12: When does a district take possession of a new approved school bus?
 - During the fiscal year the bus is approved to purchase
- Q13: When does a district make the first payment on an approved school bus?
 - During the fiscal year the bus is approved to purchase
- Q14: When does state subsidy begin?
 - The year **after** the district takes possession of the new bus **and** makes a bus payment

The Future of School Transportation



Thank you for your interest in school transportation
and your commitment to safety and security.

Contact Information

Pat Hinckley
Transportation and Facilities Administrator

Email:
pat.hinckley@maine.gov

Telephone:
207-624-6886

Websites:
<https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/transportation>
<https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/security>

Abstract

Safety is priority one when transporting students. This clinic will focus on the Maine School Bus Purchase Program that is designed to help school districts replace the aging fleet. Participants will learn the program purpose, qualifications, and process while exploring how buses are put on the list and how decisions are made. This clinic will include historic data on program funding, applications, and approvals.